



News Release

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partners with Rhode Island's Providence Parks to engage urban communities

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today designated a collaborative project in Rhode Island as the Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. The partnership is one of the first eight in the country, started under the Service's urban refuge initiative. With 80 percent of Americans living in cities, the initiative aims to meet children and families where they live and work, nurture an appreciation of wildlife conservation and foster a better understanding of the role of the Service in conserving natural resources.

"We must reach out into cities to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to develop a true connection with wild things and wild places. Our urban wildlife refuge partnerships will help us engage communities where we haven't had much of a presence," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe.

Providence is the most populous city in Rhode Island and is one of the most diverse in the U.S. The urban partnership engages the city's 100 neighborhood parks and the state's conservation organizations to leverage funding and technical support for wildlife habitats, nature trails, interpretive signs and support for a conservation program coordinator.

So far, partners, including the Service, have contributed funds of over \$125,000 in support of the partnership.

The partnership seeks to provide a conservation message in urban areas and bring school groups and families out to the Providence Parks, Rhode Island national wildlife refuges and other conservation areas in the state to engage in wildlife conservation activities. In addition to Providence parks, other partners include The Nature Conservancy, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, the Roger Williams Park Zoo, the Theodore Francis Green State Airport and many others. Creating a growing urban presence and connecting youth with nature is a priority for the Service and its conservation partners. For the latest details and updates about the partnership, visit <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/ninigret/>.

The Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative grows out of the Service's Conserving the Future vision, which sets a strategic path for the National Wildlife Refuge System for the next decade and beyond. For more information, [visit http://americaswildlife.org/](http://americaswildlife.org/)

The Service manages more than 560 national wildlife refuges and 150 million acres across America. Many of the wildlife refuges are in urban areas, including Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, Denver and Detroit, among other cities. More than 47 million people annually visit national wildlife refuges.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, <http://www.fws.gov/>

